

Environmental Protection Agency
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Portland, OR 97205

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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

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EPA-REGION 10

RE: Harbor Comments

I'm tired of a system that keeps throwing money at problems. That's exactly what the EPA is doing with their plan to clean up 10 miles of the Willamette River through downtown Portland, they're hoping that with a billion dollars' worth of dredging and heavy equipment, they can get rid of pollutants on the river bed. But there's got to be a better, more logical way to get this done, especially when the river is healing itself. The EPA's expensive, slow cleanup is the wrong way to go.

When the river is in the process of healing itself, going in and dredging could do more harm than good. It could release more pollutants into the water than were there to begin with. It's just not necessary at this point; the plan just puts people in harm's way when the system is already healing itself. Instead, the EPA should do an analysis of what's going on with the river right now, since the current plan is based on old information. There's got to be a better way to invest the money that this plan would cost, rather than going forward with an outdated plan and putting people's lives at pointless risk. And I haven't heard anybody talk about the air pollution that comes with those big machines, but it's bound to happen on a project like this.

The EPA's plan would also be costly for Portland's residents. I've lived here since 1958. I'm now on a fixed, senior-citizen's income. The tax increase that will help pay for this plan will hurt me and many others. I don't want to see my tax dollars just thrown at this problem with no guarantee of success. And in this case, the "successful" outcome would be so limited and take so long to realize that it's not advantageous for anybody in the Portland area.

I don't get down to the river as much anymore, but I've canoed and done other things there. Plenty of Portland residents use the river often, and this plan has the big potential to shut down, disrupt, or contaminate the river. The Willamette is a main source running through the downtown area. Work on it affects anybody and everybody, from the people who work and live near it to the people further away who still have to pay for it. I'd bet most average Portland residents aren't aware of this plan at all. They deserve a voice on an issue that affects their city, their river, and their check book. Let's devise a better plan with the local people in mind.

Sincerely,

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